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Domestic Art
One of the New Subjects in Our Schools

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Arts and Industries in Relation to the Home.

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SOME AIMS AND VALUES IN DOMESTIC ART

ONE OF THE NEW SUBJECTS IN OUR SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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ALABAMA GIRLS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

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MONTEVALLO, ALABAMA

Making has done more for the human race than the exercise of any, if not all, of the other modes of expression. It is absolutely indispensable to normal, physical development; it has had a mighty influence upon brain-building; it has cultivated ethics as a basis of all moral growth.

—*Francis W. Parker.*

SOME AIMS AND VALUES IN DOMESTIC ART.

ONE OF THE NEW SUBJECTS IN OUR SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

The familiar proverb, "There is nothing new under the sun," may be true from some points of view, but when we remember the schools as we knew them in the first years of our school life, when reading consisted of repeating the alphabet or of reading such inspiring stories as, "Do we go up? We do go up. Do we go in? We do go in," when spelling began with a-b ab, e-b eb, i-b ib, o-b ob, when to draw a picture was an offense worthy of punishment, when the work in the upper grades was of this same abstract nature, when we compare such a school with the best schools of today we realize that there is something new in the schools at least. In fact, there is much in them that is new.

Domestic Art is part of this new element. Its introduction into the schools of today, along with drawing, manual training, domestic science and the rest, is the result of new needs and ideals in the educational world, brought about largely by changes in the economic and social world. These changes have found expression along two distinct lines—an ever increasing demand for universal education, for equality of opportunity, and an ever growing belief in the principle of development through participation—learning through doing.

Psychologists agree that a very much larger per cent of children and young people are concrete thinkers and persons of action than abstract thinkers. That is, a much larger per cent learn naturally by studying things, actually seeing and handling them, and performing processes with them, than by studying about things. We do not need, however, to depend upon psychologists for a realization of the truth of this statement; we have only to consult our own experience to know that it is true. Descriptions, pictures, explanations, will all contribute to the understanding of a process, to the forming of a mental picture of places or conditions. But they fail to give the clear, intimate understanding that we gain by seeing, doing and experiencing. The natural way to learn is by coming in contact with real things, by performing real processes, by having experience, and then supplementing what we have learned by the experience and ideas of others as recorded in books, in works of art, etc.

Our school work in the past has concerned itself too largely with abstract work, idea study. Students have been informed about many things, but they have had little help in transforming this information into power. The memory

has been stored with many facts, but there has been little opportunity for gaining experience which will help them understand the life and conditions about them.

The new subjects which we find in our school curriculum are being placed there because through them is given opportunity for gaining knowledge and for having experience, for learning and doing. This is the vital point in the new education: that along with the study of books there must be that which vitalizes the study of books, experience with real things and with real problems.

One other point we must remember in considering these new subjects as part of our school work. Conditions are very different from what they were a hundred or even fifty years ago; due in part to inventions, to scientific discovery, to new and rapid methods of transportation and production. The wheels of fortune have turned rapidly. We no longer have the isolated family, supplying its own wants, sufficient unto itself as in colonial days. So great is the change that we find ourselves here in Alabama depending on Kansas City or Chicago for our breakfast bacon and roast pork, on California for oranges, on New York for our ready-made garments. While in turn a sugar manufacturer in California sends to Alabama for cotton sacking and February strawberries from Florida are served to New Yorkers. All this means that life has become more complex and economic conditions more exacting.

We cannot go back to the good old days if we would, but we can understand and become adjusted to the new conditions. One of the aims and purposes of Domestic Art is to help the girls and young women of the land in doing this very thing. To the end that they may perform their part in the great profession of home-making, under these new conditions, as bravely, as successfully, as womanly, as nobly, as did our grandmothers in the old days.

In Domestic Art the subject matter and the processes are directly connected with activities in the home, with the arts and sciences which contribute to home-making. Throughout the work is carried along two lines which supplement each other—subject matter and problems in construction. The principles of art and design are constantly used in various problems. Therefore along with the practical and intellectual phases of experience there is the development of the aesthetic nature.

There is always in the work some large underlying idea which controls in the selection of problems and in the choice of subject matter. It may be the technique of sewing, garment construction, care and furnishing of a girl's room, house planning and furnishing, textile study, use of

money, etc., but whatever the line of work, it is the purpose to have the pupils gain ideas and ideals, standards and guiding principles, experience and methods of procedure.

THE SUBJECT OF DRESS

The economics and importance of dress and the hygiene of clothing are studied in connection with problems in sewing and garment construction.

Every girl should learn to sew, because it develops womanliness and gentleness. It tends to make her capable and resourceful. It gives opportunity for self-expression, for working things out and for putting knowledge to the test of use. The finished article represents hard work and continued effort. The experience gives a realization, which could never be gained in any other way, of the time value of a well-made garment. Then there is the joy of achievement, the feeling of having accomplished something worth while, the satisfaction which comes with work well done and which develops self-confidence and power.

Moreover girls need standards to guide them in the matter of dress and in the hygiene of clothing, fashions changing as they do with kaleidoscopic frequency, presenting for adoption absurd, unhygienic, sometimes ridiculous styles. Girls need to realize that this is a commercial thing, the work of the manufacturer and creator of fashion; that women are not directly responsible; that in fact many of them rebel because they must so frequently adopt new styles even when they prefer the old. It is a common experience to have found some article of clothing which seemed exactly right, in every way fitted to fulfil the purpose for which it existed. But in the course of a year or two it is impossible to get it; it isn't on the market; it is no longer the style. It must be abandoned altogether or the new style must be adopted.

But girls need to realize that while women are not directly responsible they are indirectly. They have the power to control in this matter, for they are the consumers. A style which they will not adopt, articles which they will not buy, suddenly cease to be. Furthermore, a consistent use and demand on the part of women for suitable, hygienic, beautiful material and garments do count, and slowly perhaps, but surely, make for fewer absurdities and less artificiality in dress.

To be well and suitably dressed is an important consideration. "Our garments are not a meaningless covering; they speak loudly for us or against us, not only to our friends, but to the most casual observer. They have power to make us look conspicuous, absurd, undignified, and to

The Time Value of a Well Made Article is Realized in Sewing and Garment Construction.

magnify our physical imperfections. They have also power to make us feel comfortable and at ease."[1] They play a large part in maintaining or in destroying health and physical efficiency. Girls need to know that a good test to apply to a new style is to ask: Is the garment convenient, is it hygienic, does it fulfil the purpose for which it was made, does it enhance or falsify the beauty of the human form? Furthermore, they need to realize that simplicity, suitability, appropriateness, should be controlling ideas in dress; that harmony of color is much more to be desired than striking contrasts, and that art in relation to dress should always be superior to fashion.

A Gobelin Tapestry.
The Gobelin tapestries are among the most noted, for beauty of design, color and texture

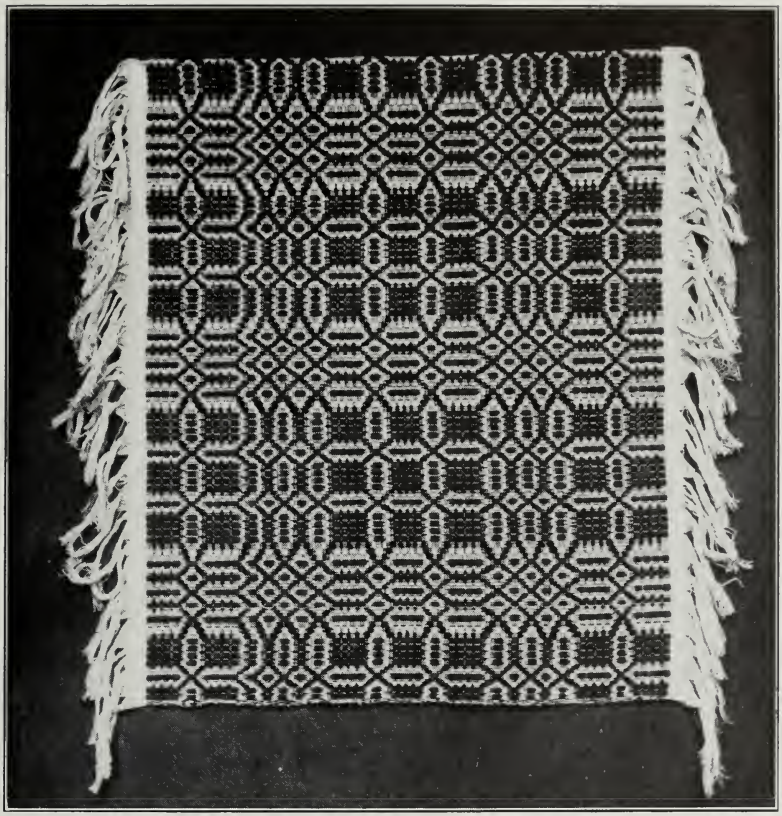
TEXTILE FABRICS AND HOW THEY ARE MADE.

Closely connected with the study of dress is that of the fabrics from which clothing is made. In former times girls

[1]**The Importance of Artistic Dress. By Cooley, in *Shelter and Clothing*.**

Hand Loom Weaving.
Weaving gives opportunity for self-expression and creative work.

were able to learn about the production of fabrics in their homes and to have a part in the fascinating, creative work of spinning and weaving. They still need this or similar experience, because it offers such large opportunity for self-expression, for developing the creative ability, for learning about something which they constantly use. Weaving is especially valuable. In it one must design, must combine



A Well Known Colonial Design in a Hand Woven Fabric.

colors harmoniously and make cloth. Children and young people alike love to weave. They find in it the joy of the true craftsman, when every power and faculty is intent on executing what the mind has conceived.

Furthermore, a girl needs to become familiar with different fabrics, to perform simple tests that enable her to avoid imitations. She needs to know something of the cost of production; otherwise how is she to be able to judge

A Gothic Tapestry.
This tapestry was made in a period when the art of weaving was at its best.

whether or not she can reasonably expect to get a pure linen handkerchief for ten cents or an all-wool dress for thirty-nine cents a yard. In short, she needs to be brought into possession of a body of knowledge that will make her a wise and intelligent buyer.

Then, too, she sees these common everyday things in their historic setting. She notes the large part the textile industries have played in the development of the race. That here man has found opportunity to use his imagination, his creative instinct, his desire for self-expression. He has not only made fabrics to meet his needs for clothing and shelter, but fabrics that would satisfy his aesthetic nature, his love of beauty; and in this connection arts have developed and crafts have sprung up. There is no more fascinating page in the history of the race than how man has taken the raw fibers, wool, silk, cotton, flax, and converted them into textile fabrics, some coarse and strong for durability, others fine and delicate, exquisite in color, design and workmanship.

She will be interested to note that in the periods when the most beautiful fabrics were made artists and craftsmen alike gave their best effort to produce them, and that throughout the ages in this field man has devised, designed and invented until at present we have the textile industries standing out as great living, vital factors in modern civilization and representing one large phase of race experience.

This study leads directly into social and economic problems, such as child labor, factory laws, minimum wage and the sweat shop system. The student is brought face to face with the fact that woman is the chief consumer in the textile field, and that because she is it is her opportunity and her duty to act intelligently and wisely in regard to these problems.

THE USE OF MONEY IN RELATION TO DRESS AND IN THE MANAGING OF THE HOME.

Girls, in general, know very little about the purchasing power of money, about the possibilities in spending money. The majority of girls have little knowledge of the cost of their own wardrobe. They have never thought about comparing the amount of money spent for clothes with the amount spent for other things. They have never formed the habit of using their judgment in the use of money. If they want something and have the money to get it, well and

good; that is all there is to it. They have never even thought about distinguishing between needs and wants, between that which is necessary for "health, comfort and happiness in the highest sense" and that which satisfies a mere whim or a passing desire. And yet these girls are to be in a comparatively short time, to a large extent, the money expenders in the home. Here again they need standards to guide them and experience to help them.

The keeping of accounts, the study of real and ideal budgets and the division of the income, working out the cost of a girl's wardrobe, studying how to economize in buying, becoming familiar with different brands of goods, all help in gaining an appreciation of the possibilities and responsibilities in the use of money.

COMBINATION JOURNAL AND LEDGER METHOD OF KEEPING ACCOUNTS.

Date of Receipts and Expenditures	RECEIPTS		EXPENSES						
	Sources	Sums	Nature of Expense	Sums	Board, Room and Laundry	Clothing	Tuition, Books, Etc.	Higher Life	Miscellany
Mar. 1	Cash on Hand	$ 5.40							
Mar. 2	.....	.....	Stamps	$ .20	.....	.....	.....	.....	$ .20
Mar. 3	.....	.....	Bulletin, .10; Acct. Sheets, .05..	.15	.....	.....	.15	.....	.....
Mar. 4	Check	40.00			.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Mar. 15	.....	.....	Fruit	.50	.....	.....	.....	$ .50	.....
Mar. 21	.....	.....	Room, board, laundry	25.00	25.00	.....	.....	.....	.....
Mar. 22	.....	.....	Shoes	3.50	.....	3.50	.....	.....	.....
Mar. 29	.....	.....	Traveling expenses	5.00	.....	.....	.....	5.00	.....
	Total	$45.00		$34.35	$25.00	$ 3.50	$ .15	$ 5.50	$ .20
	Balance	.....		10.65					
				$45.00	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

THE GROUP PROBLEM IN DOMESTIC ART.

Domestic art, along with domestic science, manual training and some other subject in the school curriculum, because of its inherent nature furnishes opportunity for group work. So much of our school work is self-centered, individualistic in character, developing the desire to surpass others, that we welcome a line of work in which the

Fig. 1. The Design

Fig 2. The Finished Problem.

group problem may be used, such problems as planning and furnishing a miniature kitchen from the standpoint of saving time and energy by means of selection and arrangement of tools and furniture, or making charts in connection with the study of textile fabrics, or making articles to be used in the school room. All through the grades and in the high school there are opportunities for group problems. Such work is especially valuable, because it awakens and develops the social consciousness, the co-operative spirit.

It gives such a different kind of experience from that gained through the individual problem and through most of the school work. The center of interest when the result is thought of is outside of the self, and the finished product is

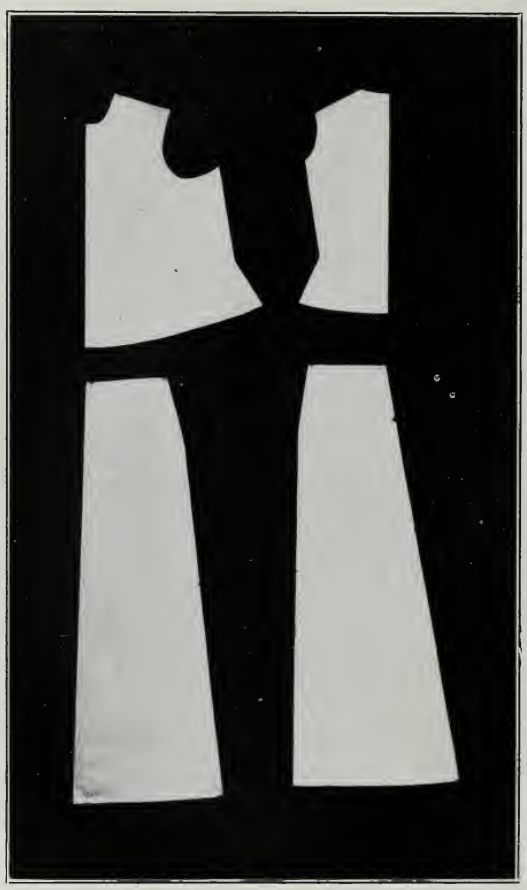


Fig. 3. The Pattern Drafted to Measure.

thought of as *ours,* and not *mine.* This all tends to develop largeness of character and community spirit.

Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 illustrate a group problem in sewing, made by about ten students. One made the design, another drafted the waist pattern, a third the skirt pattern, two others adapted the patterns, another worked out the cost, and a number helped in making the dress.

Fig. 4. The Pattern Adapted to Suit the Design.

(Figure 5) *Class Problem.*

5 yards linen @ $0.50 per yard	$2.50
¼ yard cretonne @ $1.25 per yard	.32
1 paper hooks and eyes	.05
1 spool thread	.05
2 dozen button molds	.10
Total cost	$3.02

HOUSE PLANNING AND FURNISHING.

The line of work which has perhaps the greatest value is the study of the house, the dwelling place of the home. It is the aim in this work to have students become familiar with the requirements of good building, with a set of working principles which can be applied to the planning of various types of houses; able to express their ideas in drawing and to work intelligently with an architect or builder in planning a house in which may be found the maximum convenience, comfort and beauty with the minimum expenditure of money.

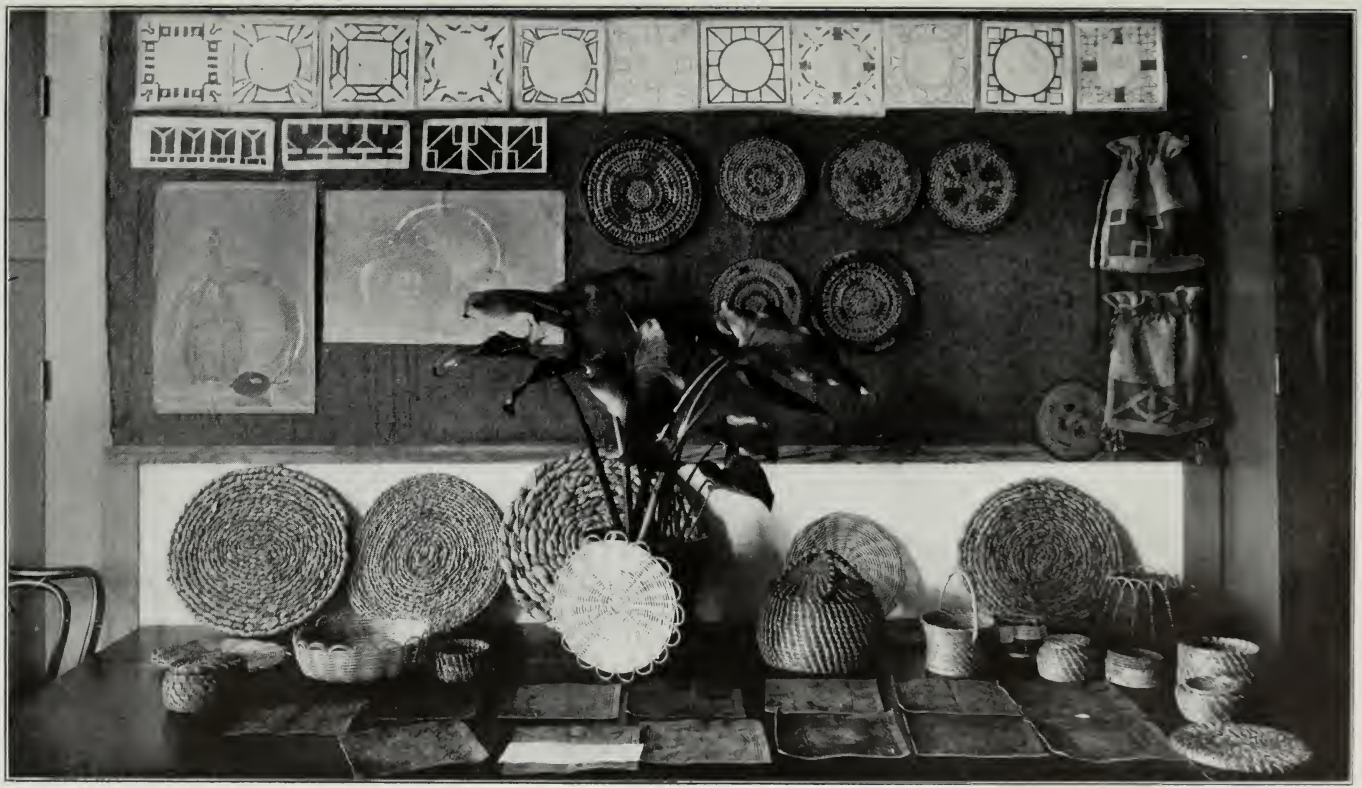
A house is not built for a month or a year, but for a lifetime or longer, and it is worth while to be able to make a successful plan. Too many houses are just built and not planned at all. This is especially true of the farm house. Such a method is almost sure to result in an inconvenient house, which means waste of time, energy and probably money for remodeling.

Since woman directs and manages the house, this line of work should certainly form a part of a girl's education, not only because it is valuable as knowledge in itself, but because it directly prepares for experience in the home and gives opportunity for considering what the home should mean to the family and to the community.

Furthermore, the work is creative, and again the study of books is carried along with the observation of real things, with the performing of real problems. The aesthetic nature finds expression in many ways. In the plans, unity, proportion, balance, rhythm must all be considered—in the division of the floor area, in the size and shape of the rooms, in the grouping of windows, in the placing of doors, etc. In the color scheme for the interior, in the selection of furniture, in the problems in applied design, such as rugs, baskets, table runners, etc., simplicity, harmony, appropriateness must be observed. In considering the exterior and the interior there are many opportunities to use the principles of design and to develop the appreciation of the beautiful.

SOME REQUIREMENTS OF A WELL-PLANNED HOUSE.

When we stop to think about it we realize that our lives are made up of work, rest and leisure—so called for want of a better name, meaning the time given to reading, music, recreation, entertainment, conversation, etc. This gives us a basis for the division of the floor area in our plan. We must have a working area, consisting of a kitchen, pantry, laundry, and perhaps a sewing room; a resting area, bedrooms and bathrooms; and a living area, dining room, living room, porch, and perhaps parlor and library. Then



Simple Problems in Hand Work.

there must be convenient passage ways and halls connecting these areas.

Whatever the size or type of house the working area should be compact, in order to save time and energy. Privacy should be the controlling idea in the resting area, while the living area should express roominess and spaciousness. Here the feeling of space must be created. This may be done by having long leading lines, by groups of windows well placed, by French doors or perhaps a fireplace. Even in a small house a plan may be such as to eliminate the feeling of smallness.

The water supply, the removal of waste, lighting, heating, ventilation, places for the necessary articles of furniture and the special requirements of each room are all considered in a well-made plan.

The living room, which the family all use together, should be the largest room, and should be "homey" and comfortable. The dining room should be placed, if possible, so as to have the morning sun. Cheerfulness should be felt in the atmosphere of this room. The bedroom should have a place for the bed so that it is not conspicuous when the door is opened, a place for the dresser where it can have good light. Off each bed room should be a closet, with shelves and a rod for clothes hangers.

The kitchen, which is a laboratory for the preparation of food, must be well lighted and ventilated, having cross drafts. The wall and floor covering should be impervious to grease and moisture. The windows, doors and furniture should be arranged with reference to the two main lines of work to be performed—the preparation of food and the clearing away process. Mrs. Frederick in her book, *The New Housekeeping,* gives the following arrangement:

"The definite equipment of the processes of Group I (preparing meal) come in order this way:

"Ice box, preparing table, stove, serving table.

"The last is at the end of the kitchen, nearest the dining room.

"The definite equipment of the processes of Group II (clearing meal) come in this order:

"Sink table, sink drain, china and dish closet.

"In general I should lay down these simple rules for a right-handed person:

"1. Ice box or pantry to left of preparing table; stove to right of working table, and serving table to right of stove.

"2. Sink table to right of sink; drain to left of sink; closet or china shelves to left of drain."

LABOR-SAVING DEVICES.

Before leaving the kitchen just a word about labor-saving devices and efficient tools. There are some devices among the many on the market at present which are valuable from the standpoint of saving time, energy or money, and of eliminating drudgery. In this class may be named the following:

Vacuum cleaner.
Fireless cooker.
Dish drainer.
Wheel tray.
Clothes wringer.
Washing machine.

THE EFFICIENT TOOL.

Women need to realize the importance of an efficient tool. Men learned this long ago, but many women are quite willing to continue using a tool which wastes time or energy, or both, because it is the one they are accustomed to and they dislike to change. Among the efficient tools may be named:

The dustless mop.
The dustless duster.
The hooded, long-handled dust pan.
The flexible knife, called a spatula.
The stationary egg-beater.
Clothes sprinkler.
Electric iron.

HOUSE FURNISHING.

As in planning, so in furnishing there are general principles which may be applied to any house.

To be able to select from the multitude of things in furniture and furnishings those which are appropriate, suited to fulfil their purpose and at the same time good in design and workmanship, requires useable knowledge, definite ideas and guiding principles.

"Simplicity is the one thing needful in furnishing," said William Morris, and certainly it should come first and always, preventing, as it will, the selection of the over-ornamented and pretentious article.

The principle of unity, if observed, will prevent incongruous combinations of styles and colors and will prove to be one of the most effective means of producing that harmony and repose which satisfies and refreshes the soul, so evident in some homes and so sadly lacking in others.

Independence and freedom should be controlling ideas in furnishing a house. Too often the determining factors

Furnishings are Studied and Problems are Worked Out in Connection with the Study of Each Room.

are what is considered the proper thing, or what one's neighbor has, rather than the needs of the family and the requirements necessary for health, comfort and happiness.

In this study of house planning and furnishing and in the making of problems for the home the student gradually comes to realize: That "the principles of truth and harmony which underlie all beauty may be secured in the most inexpensive cottage as well as in the imposing residence;" that a comfortable, convenient, beautiful house does not necessarily cost more than an inconvenient, homely one; that "the successful expenditure of money depends vastly more on brains than upon dollars, upon standards of life than upon circumstances;" that the house in all its appointments should minister to the health, comfort and happiness of the family; that it is the setting for the home and should ever be a place wherein are found rest, enjoyment, uplifting—physically, intellectually, spiritually.

These are some of the aims and values in Domestic Art which have secured a place for it as one of the new subjects in our school curriculum. Opportunity for self-expression and the use of the creative faculty, for gaining experience and knowledge, for developing the social consciousness and the appreciation of beauty.

Its material, subject-matter and processes cannot well be omitted in the educative process. We are to a large extent an industrial people. We need an intelligent understanding of the industries, the arts and crafts which keep the world a-going. Our problems are largely social problems. We need social training—the development of the social consciousness, the social habit, "the power," as Dewey says, "of observing and comprehending social situations."

As a people we need training in the appreciation of beauty; we need to realize that "nothing made by man's hands can be indifferent; it must be either beautiful and elevating or ugly and degrading," and that the mission of art is not only to produce masterpieces, but also to bring beauty into the common everyday things of life.

We need direct preparation for home-making—the greatest of all professions. To the end that there may be in the homes more hygienic conditions, greater returns for the money spent, more simplicity, more beauty, more happiness.

NOTE.—The plates for the Gobelin Tapestry, page 7, and Gothic Tapestry, page 10, are taken from Hunter's Book on Tapestry. The plate on page 9 does not illustrate our own work. All other pictures are illustrations of work done by students in the Alabama Girls Technical Institute.

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